

I am writing in support of HB 5262. It is important to remove barriers to voters found in our statutes that do not appear in the CT State Constitution, as outlined below.

The bracketed text at the beginning of HB 5262 brings the language of the statute into greater alignment with the language of the Constitution. **When the Secretary of the State suggested that the "illness" reason in the Constitution could be interpreted to include a public health pandemic as such "illness", she remarked that the statutory language is more exclusionary than the Constitution language.** Notice that the statute refers to absence of the elector during *all hours* - the Constitution does not mention all hours. Notice that the statutory language makes "illness" specific to the person - "such elector's or person's illness" without considering the possibility of a pandemic. The legislature that passed these implementing statutes enacted provisions making it more difficult to vote absentee.

Thank you.

Judy Lhamon, Hamden